Newburyport Public Schools
The Port Where Tradition and Innovation Converge

Newburyport Literacy Curriculum Framework Guide

Focus Areas

In Grade 8, the focus on student learning is on the following areas:
1. Reading
2. Writing
3. Speaking
4. Listening
5. Language

Guiding Principles for English Language Arts and Literacy Programs

The following principles are philosophical statements that underlie the standards and resources in this curriculum framework. They should guide the design and evaluation of English language arts and literacy programs in schools and the broader community. Programs guided by these principles will prepare students for colleges, careers, and their lives as productive citizens.

1. Students should receive explicit instruction in skills, including phonics and decoding. Explicit skill instruction is especially important in narrowing opportunity gaps.
2. To become successful readers, students need to develop a rich academic vocabulary and broad background knowledge.
3. Educators should help students develop a love of reading by:
   a. Selecting high-quality works of literature and nonfiction.
   b. Reading aloud in class.
   c. Providing students with ample opportunity and encouragement for sustained independent reading, both for school and on their own.
4. Students should be exposed to complex and challenging texts at their grade level and above, with extra support and scaffolding as needed, reflecting high expectations for all students.
5. Students should read a diverse set of authentic texts balanced across genres, cultures, and time periods.
6. Students should have frequent opportunities for discussing and writing about their readings in order to develop critical thinking skills and to demonstrate understanding.
7. Reading well-crafted texts is an essential foundation for developing effective writing skills.
8. Developing the ability to write well demands regular practice across multiple forms and genres of writing and opportunities to write for a variety of audiences, including expository, analytical, persuasive, narrative, and creative writing, as well as explicit instruction in vocabulary and standard English conventions.
9. Educators and families should view each other as resources who are both invested in supporting students' skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening.
10. Social and emotional learning can increase academic achievement, improve attitudes and behaviors, and reduce emotional distress. Students should practice recognizing aspects of themselves in texts (self-awareness), struggling productively with challenging texts (self-management), tailoring language to audience and purpose (social awareness), grappling vicariously with choices faced by others (responsible decision making), and collaborating respectfully with diverse peers (relationship skills).
11. Educators should select works of fiction and nonfiction that instill in students a deep appreciation for art, beauty, and truth, while broadening their understanding of the human condition from differing points of view. Reading, discussing, and writing about high-quality prose and poetry should also help students develop empathy for one another and a sense of their shared values and literary heritage, while learning about who they are as individuals and developing the capacity for independent, rigorous thinking.

Reading - Literature [RL]

Key Ideas and Details
- Cite textual evidence that most strongly supports analysis of explicit and inferential meanings
- Determine a theme
- Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents propel action, reveal character, or provoke decision

Craft and Structure
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text
- Compare and contrast the structures of two or more texts, analyzing how structure contributes to meaning and style in each text.
- Explain how differences in point of view create effects

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
- Analyze the extent to which an audio, filmed, or staged version of a text differs from the textual version
- Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on myths, traditional stories, or religious works

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity
- Independently and proficiently read and comprehend literary texts representing a variety of genres, cultures, and perspectives and exhibiting complexity appropriate for at least grade 8

Reading - Informational Texts [RI]

Key Ideas and Details
- Cite textual evidence to strongly support analysis of explicit and inferential meanings
- Determine a text's central idea
- Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events

Craft and Structure
- Determine the meanings of words and phrases
- Analyze in detail the structural elements of a text
- Determine the author's point of view or purpose and analyze how the author acknowledges or responds to other viewpoints

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
- Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums
- Delineate and evaluate the argument and claims in a text
- Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity
- Independently and proficiently read and comprehend literary nonfiction representing a variety of genres, cultures, and perspectives and exhibiting complexity appropriate for at least grade 8

Writing Standards [W]

Text Types and Purposes
- Write arguments
- Write informative/explanatory texts
- Write narratives

Production and Distribution of Writing
- Produce clear and coherent writing
- Develop and strengthen writing by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach
- Use technology to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate
  - Type a minimum of three pages in one sitting

Research to Build and Present Knowledge
- Conduct short as well as sustained research projects to answer a question
- Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources
  - Assess the credibility of the sources
  - Quote or paraphrase sources
  - Avoid plagiarism
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support written analysis, interpretation, reflection, and research

Range of Writing
- Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of discipline specific tasks, purposes, and audiences

Speaking and Listening Standards [SL]

Comprehension and Collaboration
- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions
  - Come prepared
  - Follow rules
  - Pose and respond questions
  - Review key ideas
- Analyze information presented in diverse media and formats and evaluate motive
- Delineate a speaker's argument and claims, distinguishing claims supported by reasons and evidence

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas
- Present claims and findings
- Integrate multimedia components in presentations
- Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks

Conventions of Standard English
- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing and speaking
  - Coordinate phrases and clauses in simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences
  - Form and use verbs in the active and passive voices and various moods
- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing
  - Use punctuation to indicate a pause or break
  - Use ellipsis

Knowledge of Language
- Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening
  - Maintain style and tone
  - Recognize variations from standard or formal English

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown or multiple meaning words based on grade 8 reading and content
  - Use context clues
  - Use Greek or Latin affixes and roots
  - Consult reference materials
  - Verify the preliminary determination
- Demonstrate understanding of figurative language
- Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases
  - Independently research words and gather vocabulary knowledge